SOAKAGE PITS—SUGGESTIONS.

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A soakage pit unprovided with a grease trap, but fitted with the usual type of strainer, consisting of a perforated biscuit tin in which straw, etc., is inserted, in theory should cease to function after a short period.

A type, many of which have functioned for six years and over without being dug out, is illustrated diagrammatically:

This kind differs from those commonly used by (1) having a raised platform made of stones covered with mud; (2) having tin boxes let in as strainers at the centre of each of the four sides; (3) each side being used in turn, so that after one day's use it has three days' rest; (4) the arrangement of the platform possibly providing aeration, hence probably leading to better development of aerobic bacteria in the upper layer of stones.

It is suggested that a soakage pit functions in much the same way as a contact filter or bacterial sewage bed, i.e., that suitable bacteria grow on the surface of the bricks, stones, etc., and break up the very small solid particles which normally would tend to block up the pores of the soil.

The type illustrated above was used by Indian troops, who waste much less grease than British. For the latter, grease traps should be provided.

Assuming that the pit is really a bacterial bed, it would be advantageous to study it from a scientific point of view.

The main points to be considered are as follows:

(1) The pit should be a closed one, as the temperature in it would be higher in winter and more constant throughout the year, hence more suitable for the growth of bacteria.

(2) Is it advantageous to construct a soakage pit so that part of it is above ground level?

(3) What size per company is most suitable? (It is possibly better to express this as a certain size per 100 gallons of fluid to be disposed of.)
(4) Is it better to provide one large pit or several small ones?
(5) If a large pit is provided, should there be one or more strainers? If the latter, what are the best sites for fitting?
(6) If several small pits are provided, is it advantageous to use one each day?
(7) Is one large pit, fitted with a trap at each of the four sides and each used in turn, as satisfactory as several small pits.
(8) What material is the most suitable for the growth of bacteria, i.e., stones, clinker, old tins, bricks, or sand, or is a combination of stones and sand arranged in layers more advantageous? It is suggested that bricks become odoriferous after being in use some time, hence are unsuitable.
(9) Whether any special arrangements to obtain intermittent flow are necessary?
(10) What is the most satisfactory depth and width?
(11) Is the present nomenclature satisfactory? Absorption or soakage pit suggests mechanical action only.

Travel.

COLOGNE, PAST AND PRESENT.

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When the British Army marched into Cologne on that memorable day in December, 1918, how many of those present gave one single thought of what the city really was, and had been?

Even now there are many members of the Occupation who know next to nothing of its past glories, its past tragedies, its previous occupations, its buildings and its churches.

Although we have been here now for over five years, there are I believe many still whose sole knowledge of the place is limited to the "Dom" square. Having known the city for many years, it has been suggested to me that an article on the past and some of the present conditions may prove of interest to those who have been members of the Army of Occupation. It is one of the most noted cities in Europe, to which all travellers come to trade from all parts, so that there is an enormous fleeting population within its walls, not found to the same extent in other places.

The name Cologne is derived from the Latin word "colonia," meaning colony, but in course of time this meaning has disappeared, and it appears